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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: W. G. SMITH.

Westminster Public Libraries, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

VOL. 50 NO. 3

MARCH, 1957

Talking Points

"The libraries are simply crying out for reform in their public relations, and now is the time for them to break away from their ultra-conservative methods. After all, what kind of business is it that simply waits for a customer to call, lets him choose his own book, and merely tells him when it is due back? The service is most efficient, and so courteous, of course, but where is the dash, the energy, the going out into the highways and byways to drag in the customers?" The quotation is from the magazine of the Coventry branch of NALGO and was written by a non-librarian. It was sent me by Miss Sheila Apted, of Coventry Public Library, who, as Branch Assistant Public Relations Officer, is another librarian whose good work for NALGO is helping to increase the prestige of librarians with other local government officers.

"Too much attention is paid in public libraries to local history collections. A few dithering old people and antiquarian societies claim an unfair proportion of the libraries' time and money." This view was expressed recently by a reference librarian. It is certainly true that some librarians embark on local history tasks such as minute indexing of the collection without realising how time-consuming it is and without first demanding the necessary extra staff. As a result the general work of the library suffers.

Censorship at the British Museum. There is an interesting account in *My Life and Crimes* by Reginald Reynolds (Jarrolds, 1956) of a procedure at the British Museum Reading Room. "All the more blatantly pornographic books in the Reading Room . . . are known as *Cupboard* books. If the press-mark of any book begins with CUP you know that you will not obtain that book merely by filling in one of the usual forms. You will be asked to explain to one of the higher staff just why you want to read it." Mr. C. A. Toase, who drew our attention to this says that he did not believe it until he checked the B.M.'s Subject Index and found the CUP pressmark. Perhaps, he adds, booksellers would find it profitable to mark such books in their catalogues "BM pressmark CUP."

Are Librarians Human? Doubts are sometimes expressed, but anyone attending the A.A.L. week-end conferences finds us both anxious to enjoy ourselves and to discuss our work seriously. It should be emphasised that all discussions are informal and no-one need be in fear of being overwhelmed by his seniors. A new departure in this year's entertainment is a performance by the Winchester Jazz Men. Total cost of the week-end is only £3. In recent years the Manchester Staff Guild has helped junior members to attend by paying some of their expenses. Perhaps other staff guilds will consider doing the same this year.

For further details, see the advertisement on page 44.

Your Letters

**Editorial Policy — More Censorship
— Registration Age Limit — Sharing Ideas
— Norwich**

Our Tone

Your Manchester correspondents who objected in the January issue to the present tone of the *Assistant* remind me of persons such as Mr. Alan Thomas (censorship and all that) complaining of a novel by, say, Angus Wilson. In particular, I like the use of the word "degenerate." It appeals to my "degenerate" sense of humour, the inevitable outcome of being a public library assistant. These lads may get somewhere if they keep this up. With Mr. A. C. Jones, I agree that former editors may be turning in their graves, but I suggest that indignation is not the cause of their unnatural activity. Surely they are anxious to get a peep at a library journal that is the subject of conversations, gets numerous letters, and is actually read—an editorial performance comparable to the climbing of Everest.

S. J. PAGET, *Folkestone Public Library.*

Moses or Joshua?

Recent correspondence on censorship has reminded me of the time when I was a mild victim of it myself. I was engaged on a thesis on the development of the German short story. Part of the background reading was the *Decameron*, and so I presented myself at the University Library and demanded to see a copy.

The young lady at the counter turned very red and disappeared, after muttering something about having to fetch the assistant librarian. This gentleman emerged looking rather embarrassed and said, "You'll need a certificate of moral worthiness from your tutor, old man, can't let you have the *Decameron* without it."

I was intrigued by the form that this certificate might take. Would it be like some medieval proclamation? (Know ye all that all the said poor scholar is deemed worthy of reading ye *Decameron* without calling down corruption upon himself). Would it perhaps be more suspicious? (We do give this saucy knave permission to read ye *Decameron*, but will not answer for the consequences). Or again would it merely be modern and curt? (Bearer may read the *Decameron*?). What would really have happened I never knew, for I was bemoaning my fate to a friend a couple of days later, when he said, "Don't worry; I bought a copy for a bob from that old bloke who keeps the book-stall in the market." It proved to be one of those perpetually tattered editions with very thin tissue paper over rather naughty Aubrey Beardsley type illustrations.

I believe that to this day the *Decameron* and similar works are locked in the University Library safe, along with first editions and other baubles. If you wish to view the promised land, you are taken down by a member of the library staff, and after much clicking of the tumblers are permitted to gaze and sometimes even to touch. Your role however is strictly that of Moses rather than Joshua.

Two things seem to emerge from my brush with censorship. Firstly it can nearly always be circumvented. Secondly, most banned books are so monumentally boring, that it is hardly worth troubling to obtain them.

Finally, I wish to thank our original contributor, Mr. Alan Thomas, for that bit about lack of crime in Ireland. The recent blowing up of customs posts and the shooting of police is doubtless mere patriotism.

ALAN BALL, *Finsbury Public Libraries.*

Break the Age-Barrier

What valid reason can there be for the continuance of the Library Association ruling that a person who has passed Registration is not eligible for election to the Register until they reach the age of 23 or 25 before success in the Final examination is officially recognised?

Having regard for the considerable facilities existing for the study of the Library Association examinations and their constant development to even greater efficiency, it is now quite common to pass Registration and then have several years to wait before election to the Register. Taking into account the ever rising standards of the examinations themselves, it could not be said that earlier recognition would be too drastic a step.

There can be no quarrel with the insistence upon suitable practical experience being a prerequisite of election. Approved practical experience is a condition of almost every worthwhile professional qualification and only serves to enhance the value of a qualification in the eyes of the outside world. On the other hand it is possible for a 16-year-old entrant to have gained the prescribed number of years' experience by the ages of 19 or 21, discounting the claims of National Service. Assuming he is lucky enough to pass Registration at say 21, he can only look forward to a period of waiting before being elected to the Register and, consequently, to an A.P.T. post.

Some employers are willing to recognise the worth of examination success in its own right in appointing staff, but others are just as willing to hide behind the letter of every law in the book as a means of not paying the rate for the job. Isn't it about time we took the lead in ensuring the withdrawal of this petty restriction?

So come on Library Association, come off that high horse. Demonstrate your faith in your own examination system by relying upon it to sort the wheat from the chaff, the mature from the immature. Remove these arbitrary age barriers.

DONALD DAVINSON, *Warrington Public Library.*

Restrictive Practice

Mr. Whiteman's objection in your last issue, arises from a misunderstanding of the technique of photo-charging. The returned transaction card file is not checked for overdue until the twelfth week of issue, so that in practice, the fact that a book has been repeatedly renewed by 'phone or post does not become evident until it has been on loan for at least three months.

It does not seem unreasonable to ask the reader to produce the book before re-issuing for another period, and in fact the "restrictive practice" referred to was only introduced after it was discovered that one reader was keeping certain music scores on permanent loan, and another had had the *Records of the City of Norwich* at least for two years.

P. HEPWORTH, *City Librarian, Norwich.*

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Bloody, Bold and Resolute

By Brian Baumfield

Lambeth Public Libraries

Co-operation, like "the poor," is always with us. Of late when it is mentioned, there is often to be seen on librarians' faces a certain weariness, and a feeling that it has all been heard before, said before, and so thoroughly thrashed over that nothing new can come out of it. I make no apology for putting the matter before you again, because I believe that through active co-operation in a number of fields in the next ten years we can go a good way towards achieving the ends which we all wish to see. At the risk of seeming obvious, I will state what, in my opinion these are.

First, to be in a position to give a first-class service to our own public, and, more indirectly to the country.

Consequent on this, the emergence of librarianship as a recognised profession, which plays an important, not a secondary role in the life of the community. The main answer lies, as we all know, in new legislation, and much improved financial resources.

I would like to suggest that by applying the principles of co-operation in their widest connotation, much could be done to produce the state of affairs which would be favourable to the adoption of the new Act of Parliament, which we *must* have.

Firstly the field in which we have made some progress—co-operative book purchase and subject specialization. A few years ago there burst from the Northern Hemisphere with a blaze of lights—the Farmington Plan. Grandiose in conception, backed by the almighty dollar, it was warmly greeted by British librarians with the cry that "we must do likewise." Alas, we have dwindled, peaked, and pined, and the Library Association scheme for the co-operative provision of books, periodicals, and related material, is very far from the execution of its original conception.

But the position is not completely gloomy: we have a number of large projects, and some smaller ones are working well. Amongst the earlier schemes are The British National Book Centre, the splendid Metropolitan Borough Schemes, and the enterprising group of Lancashire libraries around Swinton and Pendlebury. More recently we have been introduced to CICRIS and LADSIRLAC—or to put it into more intelligible English, The West London scheme, which now has 58 member libraries, both public and special, and The Liverpool and District Scientific, Industrial and Research Advisory Council. This latter plan, under the driving force of Dr. Chandler aims initially to improve the technical information services in Merseyside. In time it may prove as effective, and as good an advertisement for the great value of public library services, as the well known and long established Sheffield scheme.

Another recent undertaking is The Recording and Building of a National Collection of Books printed before 1801.

This selection of current projects serves to show how vital is the need amongst libraries of all kinds, how it is recognised that unless we do pull together we cannot give an effective service. The old tag of "united we stand . . ." is never more true than when applied to this particular sphere.

I feel that in due course we must become complete in our holdings of modern British books within each Regional Library Bureau area. If we are to play our full part, we must be able to deliver the goods—and quickly. At present only the very largest authorities can afford to buy on such a scale: present Bureau machinery is overloaded and necessarily lengthy. I would not suggest that with our present resources we can hope to achieve completion. But we could by a co-operative effort within (for convenience) each Bureau area, strengthen our holdings of the type of material wanted for Bureau loan, and allocate subject groups for a degree of specialization.

Such a scheme has existed since 1950 in the South Eastern area. The general supervision is entrusted to the executive Committee of the South Eastern region. (It excludes of course the Metropolitan Boroughs). Their aim is to ensure that all newly published books (vide the B.N.B.) are bought somewhere in the South Eastern area. To do this, the Dewey classification schedules

are divided into a series of narrow subject fields, which are allocated to Libraries according to their resources. With 83 Library authorities participating, the cost is kept low. In only 6 cases is it more than £100 p.a. Other examples are: Brighton £52, and Croydon £86—something like 7s. per 1,000 population. Old and foreign books were, by and large, not bought, nor reference books—and one or two other categories—based on the normal Regional Bureau rules. This scheme has enormously strengthened the resources of the area, and the participants are very pleased with the results after five years' operation.

Other regions have formed co-operative schemes with varying degrees of coverage, and I am convinced that if this practice were applied throughout, there could be prepared a framework on which we could confidently place a much larger structure.

A good deal of course depends on the good-will of the chief librarians—and particularly those of the great systems. I understand, by the way that the majority of these august personages have breakfast in bed each day; around 10 a.m. they reach for their copies of *The Times*, turn to the obituary column, and if their names aren't in it, they get up!

Another aspect of co-operation in this sphere which has not been sufficiently explored, is that between County and Municipal authorities. The majority of County Library Headquarters are situated in the County town, where there is already a long-established municipal system. At present, co-operation between them is usually limited to informal use by the County Library headquarters of the Municipal Reference Library—and that not to any large extent. A happy exception to this is the extensive co-operation between Hampshire County and Winchester City Library.

In all the smaller towns, a far more effective reference service could be built up by a formal co-operative scheme, in which one makes a concrete contribution to the other. There is at present an awful lot of duplicated effort. Carrying this a stage further, there is in Nottingham a co-operative agreement between the City, the County, and the University Libraries for co-operative provision of books and periodicals in certain fields.

Staff could be interchanged for short periods—again in Nottingham two assistants from the City and County authorities are interchanged for one to two months; it gives them valuable experience, and understanding of different practices, and goes some way towards preventing the ingrained, and hidebound outlook common in our profession.

But to revert to the general picture. The army of publications is growing each year: the army of scientists and technologists is yet to come. Where are they to turn for the materials they require? To the public libraries? or to some other source? They cannot afford to wait two months for the workings of the National Central Library. Their importance is real, is growing, and they will be given attention by any Government, now or in the future.

This brings me to the second aspect I would like you to consider—co-operation with Special Libraries. The question of the inclusion of special libraries into the National Interlending scheme is under discussion at the moment, and a memorandum was published in the *Record* in December, 1955, with the suggestion that a grouping of special libraries by subject on a national basis, might be the best answer. There is no doubt that Special Libraries are assuming a more important place in the Library world, partly for the very reasons I have outlined. Through the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, many of them are already in receipt of Government grants in the form of subsidies. I believe we can work far more effectively in co-operation with them. In most cases each has something to offer the other: the public libraries can supply approach material, the special Libraries specific and obscure titles. There are of course obvious difficulties, but the Public Libraries can adopt a more generous attitude. I deplore the extremists on both the special and public flank who do so much to harm good relations.

No one, I feel sure, will disagree with me when I say that the profession can be far more effectual if it speaks with one united voice, rather than minor discords from two main bodies and other splinter groups. I think the formation of a Municipal Libraries Section would be a good step along this road. By this, not only will the municipal libraries have opportunities for discussing their own problems, but the structure of the Library Association itself will

become more equable, and special libraries will have far less ground for claiming that it is a "Public Library Association."

One last point,—the flashpoint in library politics to-day—"The Memorandum." I do not wish to make this the main argument in my paper; there are many issues involved on both sides, and Local Government reorganisation will affect Libraries whether we like it or not. I think the Library Association in its wisdom—if not entirely with tact, has put this prickly pear forward with the right idea in view. In my opinion, if the measures were successfully put into practice we could go a long way towards vastly improved service. Mr. McColvin in a recent article in the *Library Review*, has suggested that co-operation can go too far. He points the obvious finger at the length of time involved in loan, and the disproportionate cost of getting a book. However I cannot see that this applies so much within a Bureau area, when both the time involved and the expense are very much less than when requests have to go through the National Central Library.

There are a number of far more fierce critics of the Regional Bureaux. These iconoclasts would sweep away the system built up carefully over the years, and substitute in its place loosely knit, informal arrangements based on the great city libraries, with surrounding authorities admitted into the fold. Are such schemes entirely without self-interest? Some of the small municipal systems, far from the cities, would be left quite out in the cold. It is more of a problem of reorganisation, than dissolution.

The next decade could be a vital one for us all. If some of the conditions which I have briefly outlined could be brought to pass, I feel we should be far more ready to receive the investigations of a Royal Commission on Library provision, together with its subsequent implications. We have yet to learn the art of lobbying Parliament and of public relations. There is I am sure a vast source of untapped goodwill amongst the public we serve, and we must learn how to unlock this, and turn it to practical support.

But we must speak with one voice, and we must have more to offer than we now do. Forgive me if I quote from Lady Macbeth, when I say that we must be bloody, bold and resolute,—and it doesn't much matter where we put the comma!

(From a paper given at a conference of the South West Branch of the Library Association, at Salisbury, April, 1956).

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THOMAS M. DOUST, STOKE NEWINGTON LIBRARY—

On the 9.42: or, a train of thought

What is wrong with the library profession?

Is there anything wrong with the library profession?

Does not the continual complaint of poor salaries suggest that there is?

Does not the protests of the L.A. and NALGO at senior posts offered at inadequate salaries suggest that there is?

Is it that librarians as a whole are not really worried about salaries?

Is this because so many of them are women?

Or is it because some librarians take up the career as a second choice?

Or is it all *infra dig*?

Are salaries poor because there are too many librarians?

Or because so many of them are in Local Government?

Or is it because so many of them are doing jobs which do not require a high, or any, professional qualifications?

Are salaries poor because librarians are too timid to complain?

Or are they too few and too scattered to get together?

Is the voice of the profession too weak to be heard?

Or is it not heard often enough?

Are the leaders of the profession not really interested?

Or are they too dignified?

Or don't they know how to set about improving matters?

Is lack of publicity about the profession due to lack of cash?

Or failure to take advantage of opportunities?

Do many librarians think that there is something wrong with the library profession?

Or are the moaners only a vociferous few?

What is wrong with the library profession?

Is there anything wrong with the library profesison?

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G. Scholfield, F.L.A., Public Library, Winchester.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS—16TH MARCH

RUFFLED ROUTINE

Council Notes—17th January

In previous years Council Notes have reported that the business of the January meeting was largely routine. To a degree this is inevitable because at the first meeting committees have to be appointed, chairmen elected, officers co-opted, dates for future meetings and other functions fixed—all the cumbersome machinery of democracy oiled for another year's working. Successive new Presidents have looked to the January meeting to provide them with gentle exercise in Chairmanship whilst they become accustomed to the altitude on the platform. Often the routine becomes slightly ruffled—how much so depends largely upon the temper of the back bench. No spanners from this direction were necessary to stop the wheels this year. They failed even to start properly.

Miss Willson, impeccably punctual during ten years' service on the Council, arrived late at the first meeting of her Presidential year, a victim not of London's diminished transport services, but of a truculent hour-hand on her watch. Sundials may now become fashionable among Presidents. Mr. Tynemouth had whiled away some moments introducing the new Vice-President. When Miss Willson had thrown off her taxi-excited fluster and assumed Presidential dignity, the Past President began again, and decorated his successor with her badge and chain of office.

The Council is still of the opinion that some changes are likely to be necessary in the conditions of L.A. membership, but after hearing a report of a meeting between Honorary Officers of the L.A. and the A.A.L., they decided to defer further consideration until the recommendations of the L.A. Reorganisation Sub-Committee are made public.

Last year's Officers of Council were all re-elected and co-opted, and Mr. Thompson was appointed Chairman of Council. The Honorary Secretary's report was principally concerned with posts at inadequate salaries, most of which have received adequate publicity elsewhere. The Sussex Division were congratulated on their successful attempts to dissuade intending candidates for the undergraded post of Central Lending Librarian at Worthing.

The committees having been appointed, Council adjourned to allow them to meet. This left Mr. New, Honorary Publications Officer, to bat first after lunch. His report on the Press and Publications Committee contained the news that Clough's *Bookbinding for Librarians* is at the printers, and a recommendation that no action should be taken to obtain a new edition of Corbett's *Introduction to Public Librarianship*. This latter was promptly reversed by the Coun-

cil. Mr. Tomlinson expressed regret that the Presidential Address for 1956 should have appeared in the *Assistant* only in 1957. The Editor's unperturbed air was explained by Mr. Tynemouth's admission that he had only been able to forward the copy to the Editor in "the last quarter of the year" in time perhaps for the December issue, but that, the Past President felt, "had a certain unity."

The Education Committee report was received amicably enough, only because a promised procedural battle was postponed until the Honorary Treasurer pronounced the findings of the Finance Committee. Mr. Thompson's lecture to the Council on the need for professional librarians to do all they can to help in tuition for the new Teacher/Librarian certificate was brought to a halt when he was informed that he had been appointed to a sub-committee to consider a correspondence course for this purpose. Bitten, the biter subsided into silence.

With the coming of the Finance Committee's report, routine was finally driven to the wall, and the promised procedural battle ensued. Following a protest by some Sheffield tutors, the Education Committee had again recommended to the Finance Committee that full fares of all correspondence course tutors be paid to attend the national conference of tutors in May. Resolutely the Finance Committee had reaffirmed their original decision to pay fares only above £1. The President, having ruled discussion on this out of order under Standing Orders, promptly found said Standing Orders suspended on a motion from the floor. A close vote and a recount confirmed the Finance Committee decision, and Mr. Atkinson's request for a division was denied. Tea came to allow the President her second, if not her third, breath.

After this second interval the meeting passed serenely to its end. The draft Annual Report was received with only minor amendments. Arrangements were made for the Presidential Induction and the A.G.M. in London in May, and Mr. Thompson was invited to address the A.A.L. Session at the L.A. Conference in Harrogate next September.

Following reports by our representatives on the L.A. Council and committees, Mr. Tomlinson tried to persuade the Council to ask the L.A. to prepare a "job classification" of posts in libraries. This was understood and misunderstood in so many and various ways that Council decided to think again in March, and in the meantime asked Mr. Tomlinson to provide them with a memorandum for discussion.

The President ended as she began the meeting, by astonishing the Council with her timing. The Council rose at 4.55—the earliest for many years. With a body like the A.A.L. Council, only efficient chairmanship can yield such results.

Some critics have taken satisfaction in the decreasing number of quotations in the last few issues of these notes. This has not been deliberate, but wit for a few months seems to have been as tightly rationed as petrol. The New Year has brought a fresh supply, intentional and otherwise, and like the *Observer*, we are again able to offer some—

SAYINGS OF THE WEEK

- "I don't understand what Mr. Jones means, but I'm prepared to resent it." (W. G. Thompson, replying to comments by A. C. Jones on the Yorkshire week-end school reported in the Annual Report).
- "Maybe it's because you're a Londoner." (P. D. Pocklington, without music, inviting Miss Willson to give her Presidential address in London).
- "If a majority supports Mr. Phillips it would be a simple majority." W. Tynemouth, during the procedural fracas reported above).
- "The Presidential dangler" (Honorary Treasurer, recommending insurance of the Presidential badge and chain).

ERIC MOON.

The A.A.L. Council would welcome assistants who would like to attend one of its meetings. This year the Council meets at Chaucer House at 1.30 p.m. on Thursday, 14th March, 16th May, 12th September, and 14th November. As space in the "public gallery" is limited, will members wishing to attend please give as much notice as possible to the Honorary Secretary, Kensington Central Library, London, W.8.

Librarianship On The March

— or walking backwards?

A report and some reflections on a recent talk by Dr. Ranganathan

By Brian Selby, Manchester Public Libraries

Dr. Ranganathan impressed me as being a virtuoso librarian, a man of deep awareness of the possible brilliance of the future of humanity who believes that librarianship has an important place in that future.

He dealt mainly with the problems of communication, claiming, firstly, that the library profession had not catered for what he called "the lower I.Q's." He pointed out that these people are not used to picking up ideas from the printed page and that the profession should investigate their capacity to absorb ideas by reading so as to ascertain whether or not there is any need for a reform in the printed book. Experience in India was that even high I.Q's. had difficulty in benefiting from books because they were not used to reading as a means of communication of ideas. Dr. Ranganathan suggested that this could perhaps be overcome by providing profusely illustrated books, letterpress being not more than one quarter of the contents. Obviously the visual impact on the senses of the pictures in such a book would reinforce the impression on the brain of the intellectual image obtained by reading the letterpress. The publishing over the last fifty years of books specially written and attractively produced for children proved that the special class of literature he suggested for the lower I.Q's. could be developed.

His next point was that literacy does not ensure that all the members of a literate population have the reading habit. This is the job of the librarian, to help the lower I.Q's who have found their way into our libraries to find the literature they need. But in addition to safeguarding literacy and instilling the reading habit, the librarian has a position as the custodian of the leisure of the community. Industrial society has given the people more and more leisure, and the librarian has to take part in the essential task of helping men to use their free time. Finally on this topic, Dr. Ranganathan reminded us that automation is going to create still more leisure for the people and consequently a greater need for the librarian's participation in the work of assuring the proper use of that leisure.

Dr. Ranganathan introduced his remarks on communication in science and industry by showing that the increasing world population makes "research leading to intensive use of natural resources a matter of life and death, and the profession should help in the making known and exploitation of the results of research." The rapid development of nuclear energy compared with the slow progress in the early years of electric power has been aided by the vastly improved documentation services of to-day.

The world of research is the world of the micro-thought unit: the single article, not the bound volume of a periodical; the single chapter, not the whole book. Even a man of genius would now find it difficult to keep pace with all the published literature of research, and a new function of librarianship which emerged 20 years ago is the organization of micro-thoughts so that they can be passed to the right worker at the right time. Many new techniques are needed to achieve this organization, but their development was negligible before the formation of

F.I.D., which has since been forging ahead with this work of organizing the results of research.

But in addition to the research scientist there is the problem of communication for the worker on the production line. Dr. Ranganathan suggested that this problem also might be solved by the creation of a special class of literature, designed for the man at the bench. "The march of library service demands different techniques."

Dr. Ranganathan maintained that the L.A. examinations should direct professional education towards equipping young librarians to face new problems, such as those of the lower I.Q's. and the man at the factory bench, and to provide differing kinds of library service to meet the demands caused by social changes, such as the increase of leisure. He seemed doubtful about the inclusion of the history of literature in a modern professional examination syllabus.

There must be more documentation services for industry, he said, but "we have to struggle for finance. It is not fair to let county and borough library services be financed only by the local rate. The local rate cannot bear the burden which the library requires." The local authorities' argument that to accept financial aid from the Exchequer would be to lose their local freedom is not valid. The universities had used a similar argument against the formation of the University Grants Committee, but to-day U.G.C. is in operation and the universities still retain their freedom.

Dr. Ranganathan sees far into the future of librarianship. "I am an optimist and know that humanity will always move forward," he said. He urged us to "give up conservatism in library matters, which are of enormous importance and may decide the future of humanity. If we stay put where our ancestors left us, we regress in public opinion. Instead of bungling along as we have done in the past, we must look ahead to social changes so that we can come forward with the right kind of library service."

Dr. Ranganathan's talk may have seemed a little too high flown for the average assistant working in a branch library where the service often seems to be walking backwards instead of marching forward, but the questions which this very distinguished visitor raised can be applied to every library system in the country. Can we conscientiously believe that we are instilling the reading habit into the lower I.Q's. and assuring the proper use of the leisure of the people by providing libraries which are often nothing more than collections of entertainment reading? Are the services to science and industry of the giants of Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and the rest so good that the librarians of smaller places can sit back and say what a splendid job the nation's public libraries are doing for industry? Apparently not, for already Dr. Urquhart of D.S.I.R., seems to have cast aside the majority of public libraries in his efforts to establish a national scientific information service, especially for the smaller firms which cannot afford libraries of their own.

Dr. Ranganathan's remarks were very relevant to the contemporary situation of British public librarianship, which is apparently faced with breaking away from the parent local authorities so that a national library service with a high national standard of service and with national finance may be created. But before this move is made the profession has to decide to what extent and by what methods it intends to meet the changing demands of the nation for library service. The implications of this distinguished visitor's talk should stimulate the reconstruction of our professional aims and methods which is the essential prelude to the continuation of the march of library service in this country.

EILEEN COLWELL

"HOW I BECAME A LIBRARIAN"

Reviewed by Alan Morley

Miss Colwell, Children's Librarian of Hendon, needs no introduction in Youth Libraries circles. She is one of the pioneers of children's librarianship in this country as it is known to-day, and a founder-member of the Youth Libraries Section. One has only to glance through the 1937-38 volume of *The Junior Bookshelf* to find accounts of the formation and first meetings of the Association of Children's Librarians, of which Miss Colwell was the first secretary. In 1938 the Association had sixty-four members. Now as the Youth Libraries Section it has nearly a thousand, a strength that says much for the energy, enthusiasm and foresight of its pioneer members.

Miss Colwell is the daughter of a Methodist minister, and her youth was spent in travelling from circuit to circuit, living in houses that looked as if they had been furnished from jumble sales. Miss Colwell had, and has, two passions—literature and work with children. When she left school she was determined to enter librarianship and won a scholarship to the London University School of Librarianship—the first scholarship for librarianship training to be given by the West Riding Education Committee. After qualifying she found it no easy matter to secure a post—most librarians were still wary of college trained librarians. At last she obtained a "middle-senior" appointment with a North-country authority at the princely salary of thirty shillings a week. After months of general

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1957 Annual General Meeting of the A.A.L. will be held at Chaucer House, on Wednesday, 15th May. Notices of motion for this meeting must be submitted in writing, signed by two members of the Association, to reach me within fourteen days of the publication of this notice. If a member is proposing to submit an amendment to the Rules of the Association, such amendment must be signed by at least ten members.

E. E. MOON,

Honorary Secretary.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,

KENSINGTON HIGH STREET,

LONDON, W.8.

lending library work she was sent to a branch which had a children's library. Now she could put her long-cherished dreams into operation. Story hours, a bright colourful library, extra-library activities! So much for initiative. Her chief, on his next tour of inspection, took one look at her laboriously-designed posters and ordered her to take them down "as they were not an improvement." Story hours, too, were forbidden—if there was time to spare there was plenty of work that needed doing! Even the right of book selection was denied her.

It was, therefore, with a feeling of escape that Miss Colwell applied for, and was appointed to, the post of school library organiser for Hendon. In theory this was only a part-time and temporary appointment. In practise it was to be her life's work. Starting from scratch, and with the help of an enthusiastic chairman, Miss Colwell built up a stock sufficient for centres at seven schools. From this small beginning grew the present children's service at Hendon. At Hendon, the schools' service was inaugurated before the formation of the adult libraries, so, as the only librarian employed by the authority, Miss Colwell found herself, at the age of 23, helping to "short list" her future chief librarian. A unique experience for any assistant!

Since then, Miss Colwell has built up an almost unrivalled reputation in children's librarianship. She has lectured, broadcast, advised publishers and has even taken part in an international story-telling convention, though unfortunately, no mention of this is made in her book.

It may be argued that this is too personal an account to be a good career book, there are few opportunities for pioneering in modern librarianship, and the book has only one short chapter on how young people can enter the profession to-day.

I think this matters little. Miss Colwell has managed to transmit her enthusiasm to her readers in a way that no work of the "text-book" type could hope to do. If it encourages young people to enter librarianship as a career rather than a means of merely earning a living, her trouble will have been more than repaid.

How I Became a Librarian is published by Nelson in the "Enterprise library" series. It is unfortunate that more enterprise was not shown over paper, format and binding, yet the book remains good value at 6s.

Bad Bard

By Ian Wilkes, Barking Public Library

There are, taking the widest view, four types of historical novel: the book, written in the past, that has become a period piece; a novel set in the past entirely; a novel that explores the past from a modern setting (outstanding in this field is Josephine Tey's *Daughter of Time*); and the book that uses an historical argument to influence the present.

John Appleby's *The Stuffed Swan* (Hodder and Stoughton, 11s. 6d.) is in this latter group and is concerned with the tired topic of "Who wrote Shakespeare?" The candidate, according to Mr. Appleby, is Queen Elizabeth I, but he makes very little effort to justify his selection: apart from the original "proof" offered of a scrap of a letter to W.S. from Elizabeth, saying that she wrote Hamlet—no further evidence is presented in the book: instead it becomes a hodge-podge of conflicting themes, most of them built on false premises. For example, assuming there to be incontrovertible proof that Elizabeth did write Shakespeare, then I cannot agree that the following hypotheses presented by Mr. Appleby are true:—

1. A publisher of the complete works of Shakespeare would stand to lose such a considerable amount of money that he would incept various forms of skulduggery to remove the evidence.
2. Stratford on Avon would be considered to be a fraud, all Stratfordians would be thrown out of work and the Memorial Theatre and all businesses connected with the Shakespeare legend would be closed.
3. To destroy the paper upon which the proof is based, after it had been widely publicized, photographed and authenticized, would render the matter null and void.
4. Supporters of Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Rutland and Shakespeare—as author of the works—would band together to sabotage this destroyer of their own theories.
5. Daily papers, from the *Mirror* upwards, would give the discovery the greatest amount of publicity ("a double inside column with a leggy photograph in the *Mirror* to a sober three inches on the home page of *The Times*") for about a fortnight, and then let the subject drop entirely the moment the paper was lost.
6. Feminists all over the country would postulate the theorem that: "Elizabeth wrote Shakespeare; Shakespeare was a genius; therefore Elizabeth was a genius; therefore all women are geniuses; therefore Beethoven's mum wrote the symphonies.

On the credit side is the slender recommendation that the Baconian and the Henry-de-Vere-Earl-of-Oxford-ian theories are given a fair statement, the latter quite handsomely (the Marlowe theory is dismissed as ridiculous).

The fundamental fault with Mr. Appleby's book—apart from the mainly literary quibbles above—is that he never decides what genre he is engaged upon; his work has strands of romantic interest, historical argument, adventure, fantasy and humour so intertwined as to make the book dull to devotees of any of the individual aspects.

From a student's essay: This subdividing of the various subjects in each group divides by stages until no further division is possible, and the final object consists of itself alone.

ASSISTANCE TO STAFF—2

Tony Shearman

Although writers of letters to newspapers and magazines are only a small proportion of those who are continually proclaiming their intention to write or their opinion that someone ought to write, nevertheless it is surprising how many "ordinary citizens" daily send in their considered judgements to one editor or another; the kind of people, it may be fairly safely stated, who are users of public libraries, constitute the group that keeps editors happy with unpaid copy. From their homes these would-be legislators dictate economic and foreign policies—in print only. Local weekly papers frequently provide space for this material where the town councillor and the school teacher can be seen lashing each other with their pens, each week getting more and more purple in their prose. To feed this conflict, the protagonists need facts—often urgently.

It may be that they will come to you, each smarting under the others verbal scorn, and panting to return with a subtle and unanswerable point the next week.

"As soon as man thinks about anything that matters, he must get an Atlas." So said Rand McNally (or apparently so since it is quoted on the title page of his *Cosmopolitan World Atlas* (1953) and is not given in any dictionary of quotations). However the information Man finds in the Atlas he gets is likely to be out of date, particularly in an economic atlas; and the atlases whose description follows should be thought of primarily as valuable for the way the information is presented: only this way is there compensation for out-of-dateness. The little dots, squares, stars, etc, which the economic cartographer employs are chiefly useful for showing your impatient letter writer what he wants to know, speedily and graphically. For example, in one of the atlases he will see at a glance just where in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe by means of a small black circle, Uranium (incl. pitchblende, etc.) is produced. Nothing is more calculated to confound an opponent than a statement such as "It is well known of course that Uranium (incl. pitchblende, etc.) is being produced in Russia at Ukhta and Cluj . . ."

The atlases are HUMLUM, Johannes (you can't forget the name once seen and you may have a tendency to repeat it to yourself over and over again, especially on long train journeys), *Atlas of Economic Geography*, 4th ed., 1955, 15s. and OXFORD *Economic Atlas of the World*, O.U.P., 1954, 30s. This second atlas is being expanded on a regional basis, one volume having so far appeared: *U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe*, O.U.P., 1956.

Humlum was intended to be in two volumes: Vol. I, maps; Vol. II, illustrated text; but the second volume may not be published until the fifth edition appears. The other three editions were in Danish; this edition is in German, French and English as well as its original language. Statistical data which is very brief, applies to one of more of the years 1950-1953. The date appears at the top of each page. For the U.S.S.R. and some Eastern countries, statistics for 1938 or 1934-8 have been used, and the expanded Oxford atlas mentioned above is obviously to be preferred. Both the projection and the scale are inferior to the Oxford atlases, but on the other hand there are large scale inset maps which "blow up" a crucial area with considerable illumination; and facts which are conveyed by tables in the Oxford atlases are shown by map in Humlum. For example, Humlum gives the world distribution of the

production of coffee and also world import and export; the Oxford atlas gives only production by map. Incidentally, what looks like an exclamation mark over Ireland in Humlum's inset map, is a dot with a figure one over it to show that Ireland imports 1,000 metric tons. In Humlum you can see that the U.S.A. consumes 1,162,000 metric tons of coffee; you can read in the Oxford atlas that the U.S.A. drinks 40 per cent. of the world's coffee. So for speed and graphic presentation, Humlum is useful (though valuable space is wasted retailing the same facts four times, in different languages); for fuller information and greater accuracy, the Oxford atlas is superior.

The OXFORD *Regional Economic Atlas—the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe* has a comprehensive list at the front ("Books of Reference") covering the countries included in the atlas. Unlike its parent, the text is placed after the map to which it refers and not separately at the end. There are three main parts: General reference maps, Topic maps, i.e. showing where Uranium (incl. pitchblende, etc.), is produced, and Gazetteer. The figures used are for the year 1954, or 1953 where later figures are not available.

N.B.—If you can actually LOOK AT THE BOOK sometime, my purpose will have been achieved.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY EDUCATION

A conference for tutors of all kinds will be held at Chaucer House on the week-end 4th—5th May, 1957.

It will be arranged by the S.C.E.L. (London Region) and the A.A.L.; its object is to promote discussion on all forms of library tuition and education.

The programme will include papers on the library schools, part-time tuition, and correspondence courses. There will also be sessions on the basis of subject taught and social activities. The conference fee is 7s. 6d.

All tutors, past and present, are invited. The full programme and application forms are available from H. G. W. Fodder, F.L.A., Hon. Secretary-Treasurer, S.C.E.L., Ealing Central Library, Walpole Park, London, W.5.

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